

Ref: 18/501312/FULL

Additional representations:

Kent AONB unit: Objection remains: Welcomes the proposed lowering of the AOD of the height of the building by setting it lower into the ground and the provision of a natural gradient landform, planted with orchards species which would help moderate the visual impacts of the building on the AONB landscape, but the proposed cold store would have a detrimental impact on the Mid Kent Downs Landscape Character Area of the Kent Downs AONB that would weaken the characteristics and qualities of natural beauty and landscape character and disregard the primary purpose of the AONB designation, namely the conservation and enhancement of its natural beauty.

We disagree that the building is of a scale and type which is commonly seen in the area and therefore disagree that the building would not be incongruous.

Complexes of farm buildings which are of a similar scale are made up of a series of buildings with varying eaves heights, roof forms, profiles and materials which assist in breaking up the visual dominance of the buildings.

Proposals do not accord with the Design Principles of the Kent Downs AONB Unit's Landscape Design Handbook which recommends using changes of materials or colours and varied pitches and shapes for roofs.

Under this revised approach in the new NPPF, the potential for significant adverse impacts on the natural beauty of the AONB should now be foremost to the evaluation as to whether development is major or not.

Agricultural Consultant: The yields assumed for more modern, higher yielding varieties are broadly in line with what appears to be achievable from other reported data. The fruit produced on these holdings needs transporting via the local road system either immediately at harvest, or after a period of on-farm storage. Based on the Planning Statement, the large new packing facility at Hoo St Werburgh will be used.

Bicknor Parish Meeting:

Pleased to support responsible agricultural development but opposed to the industrialisation of this development:

- too big
- increases the likelihood of flooding several Grade II listed buildings
- visual, light and noise pollution especially on summer nights when windows will be open
- suggest move the development closer to the new site entrance eg 50m away from the village and closer to the new site entrance.

Local Residents 4 additional objection letters have been received:

- Concerns for safety of drivers, riders and pedestrians accessing Swanton Street / Hollingbourne Road which has poor visibility.
- a detailed assessment should have been undertaken in terms of monitoring the traffic flows: average speeds are significantly higher than 20 mph
- Poor and inconsiderate driving by Gotham's lorries

- In winter the hazards will be increased
- lane cannot facilitate such large and cumbersome vehicles
- current passing bays are not sufficient
- constant noise, light and movement
- No background noise survey has taken place,
- external condensers
- emergency generators
- Increase in seasonal workers : additional human and refuse waste
- flood risk
- CAS should be further distance from the village to a direct access from the B2163 Hollingbourne to Bredgar road
- Needs detection system for refrigerant leak
- harm to the local landscape AONB
- insufficient evidence that will be used for fruit picked at Swanton
- no evidence justifying the size, out of all proportion to the size of Bicknor village
- a Pack house is an inevitable step

Discussion:

For clarification, the application was referred to the Planning Committee solely because having been called in by the neighbouring Hollingbourne PC.

The Parish Meeting and officers both sought a relocation of the building further from the hamlet of Bicknor but the applicant considered that there would be a worsening of landscape impact. The application needs to be considered on its merits as per the submission.

Suggested condition 2 is to be refined for clarity based on plans submitted showing the extent of the 2 farms. Suggested condition 11 includes a routing condition that needs to be the subject of a legal agreement so that KCC Highways and Transportation can enforce that element.

Recommendation amended

The Head of Planning and Development BE DELEGATED POWERS TO GRANT planning permission subject to the prior completion of a legal agreement to provide the following (including the Head of Planning and Development being able to settle or amend any necessary terms of the legal agreement in line with the matters set out in the recommendation resolved by Planning Committee):

- All HGVs using the CAS hereby approved shall only use the routes detailed in a routing plan to be submitted to and approved by the Local Highway Authority.

and the imposition of revised conditions 2) and 11) as set out below:

- 2) The building hereby permitted shall be used only for the storage of fruit that has been grown within Swanton Farm and/or Gibbens Farm (shown on approved drawings 01.002.1769.01SF and 01.002.1769.02GF) unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority and it shall not be used for any other purpose.

Reason: The building in the AONB is justified only by the operational needs of Swanton Farm and Gibbens Farm.

- 11) All HGVs shall use the access detailed in drawing P1790/02 which shall be completed in accordance with the details hereby approved before first use of the building hereby permitted. The approved sight lines shall thereafter be kept free of all obstruction to visibility above 1.0m high.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and highway safety.